

Case Number:	CM14-0147919		
Date Assigned:	09/15/2014	Date of Injury:	12/09/2012
Decision Date:	12/03/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/27/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/11/2014

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to an expert reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The expert reviewer is licensed in Acupuncture and is licensed to practice in Florida. He/she has been in active clinical practice for more than five years and is currently working at least 24 hours a week in active practice. The expert reviewer was selected based on his/her clinical experience, education, background, and expertise in the same or similar specialties that evaluate and/or treat the medical condition and disputed items/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

The patient is a 48-year-old male who sustained an industrial injury on 12/9/12. The patient was a police officer, and as he was on foot pursuit of a suspect when his left knee buckled. At that time, he sustained injury to his left knee and low back. His primary diagnosis is pain in joint, lower leg. His treating diagnoses are: primary localized osteoarthritis lower leg, pain in joint lower leg, degenerative lumbar/lumbosacral intervertebral disc, and chondromalacia. The records suggest that the patient had left knee arthroscopy. He is on the following medications: Ketoprofen, Cyclobenzaprine, Prednisone taper, Norco and Terocin lotion. The records do suggest that the patient uses these medications on rare occasions. He has been given a home exercise program that he continues to utilize and has had Synvisc injections in his left knee with a beneficial result. The patient also has had requests for physical therapy (PT) and chiropractic care. The documentation provided shows patient tolerance to the prescribed medications and a reduction of symptoms. Also, the documentation suggests that the patient had symptom relief from the Synvisc injections.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

The Final Determination was based on decisions for the disputed items/services set forth below:

6 acupuncture visits for the left knee: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines- Online Version- Knee

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: He has been prescribed medications and a home exercise program. The documentation suggests that the patient has had symptom relief from both. The patient also received Synvisc injections to the left knee, and again received relief from the injections. The patient also underwent left knee arthroscopy. As per CA MTUS Acupuncture Medical Treatment Guidelines (9792.24.1), acupuncture is used as an option when pain medication is reduced or not tolerated, it may be used as an adjunct to physical rehabilitation and/or surgical intervention to expedite functional recovery. Acupuncture treatments may be extended if functional improvement is documented as defined in Section 9792.20. CA MTUS Acupuncture Guidelines requires clinical evidence of functional improvement for additional care to be considered. CA Acupuncture guidelines cited 9792.24.1 states that the time to produce significant improvement is 3-6 treatments. It also states that acupuncture may be extended if functional improvement is documented including significant improvement in activities of daily living, reduction of work restriction, and reduction of dependency on continued medical treatment. The documentation provided suggests that the patient is taking medication (sporadically), and the patient's functional improvement with the previous injections and home exercise program is favorable. Therefore, the request for acupuncture treatments is not be medically necessary.